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The Passing of the Forest

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

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THE PASSING OF THE FOREST

I saw the forest in the hills
Where wandered many an antlered band,
Where lurked the trout in rippling rills
Above Loch Morlick's shining strand.

I wandered through the leafy dells,
Among the heather pink and white,
I saw a host of Scotch bluebells
Sway in the sunshine warm and bright.

I saw the hare and Highland grouse
From cover steal with cautious air,
I watched the deer in quiet browse,
Among the fern and flowers fair.

The birches rustled in the breeze,
The shadows danced upon the rocks;
While faint and far among the trees
I heard the barking of a fox.

But now, alas! those days are o'er,
And peace has fled beyond the hills;
The axe is heard along the shore,
And falling trees have choked the rills.

Where stood the tall and stately fir,
And sprang the bluebells, fair and sweet,
Is heard the sawmill's rasping whirr,
And comes the echoing tramp of feet.

The wooded isles have ceased to be;
The deer have fled; the grouse have flown;
The hills resound with crashing tree,
And all is desolate and lone.

But in the distant, future years,
Sweet Nature, with her healing hand,
Shall come and shed her kindly tears
Upon this sad and desolate land.

The bluebells fair shall bloom again,
The deer shall wander by the shore
And peace shall rule the valley, when
The gang is gone for evermore.

FARMER CORNCOB COMES TO GRANDE PRAIRIE

Have you heard how Farmer Corncob
Came to settle at Grande Prairie,
In the Prairies City District,
Just a few miles north of Bear Lake?
You have not, so I will tell you,
Though my verse is somewhat rummy,
But sit tight and you shall listen—
If you don't, then go to Hades.
From the land of the Dakotas,
Where the wheat had yielded nothing,
Came the corncob land a-hunting,
Bringing bills of many X's;
Came to Saskatoon and Gull Lake,
Edmonton and south to Lethbridge,
Looked at many quarter sections,
Was not satisfied to purchase,
On the Edmonton Dungwagon, B.C.
Which is sometimes called a railroad,
Came the corncob, still unsettled,
And alighted in Grande Prairie.
There he saw a sign which shouted
That the firm of Chris McDonald
Was at hand to furnish quarters
Of all sizes and descriptions.
Farmer Corncob, once directed,
Sought McDonald out and told him
What he wanted in the land way,
And enquired how was business.
On the instant that he heard him,
Chris McDonald, on the double,
Quickly cleared his decks for action,
Quickly froze onto the Corncob.

Told him tales about the country,
How the lakes were full of fishes,
How the woods were full of mooses,
And the stubble full of chicken.
Told him tales about the barley,
Wheat and oats and many grasses.
Took him out joy-riding, gratis,
In his faithful old tin Lizzie.
Farmer Corncob was delighted
With the country and its prospects,
Settled on a quarter section
Just a few miles north of Bear Lake.
Sent a wire to his Mrs.
Who was living in Dakota,
In the land of the Dakotas,
Saying "Come at once and join me,
I have found a second Eden
Where the crops are always bumpers.
There is wealth for us awaiting
In the district of Grande Prairie.
Sell the farm and sell the horses,
Sell the cows, and all the chickens,
Come, and bring the little Corncobs,
All the seven little Corncobs."

Mrs. Corncob, as directed,
Sold the farm and all the chattels,
Brought the seven little Corncobs,
Met her husband in Grande Prairie.
Now the Corncobs, re-united,
Are all settled on a quarter
In the district of Grande Prairie,
Just a few miles north of Bear Lake.

ADDENDA

Come to Prairies city district,
All you husky landless Corncobs;
You will find a hearty welcome,
From its climate and its people.

CALAMITY

The world was peaceful in the summer sun,
And every man was busy at his trade.
The crowds were moving by in search of fun,
The hand of war, it seemed, at last was stayed.

But on that fatal August day,
The Devil was unleashed, his aid was sought;
The Teuton beast began to burn and slay,
And raised the battle cry of "Me Und Gott!"

'Twas gallant Belgium first who drew the sword,
And held the fierce invader in his path;
Defied the Kaiser and his warlike horde,
While over Europe burst a storm of wrath.

The warlike bugles crashed aloud in France,
And with a bound the nation sprang to arms,
Shook open to the breeze the pennoned lance,
And left the women-folk at home to tend the farms.

Then wild and high the clarion call arose—
The call of England to her free born sons,
The call of Britain when beset with foes—
The Empire call to rally round the guns.

And Italy, after hesitating long,
At length took up the iron gauge of war,
Exchanged her hymn of peace for martial song,
And sought her ancient foe within his lair.

Oh, Motherland, across the seas so far.
United States, my country first and last,
Why art thou laggard in the glorious war?
Forget thy selfish doctrines of the past.

Down from the frozen forests and the plains
Of Russia came a mighty host of men—
An arm of strength, though somewhat shy on brains,
They rolled across the Prussian field and glen.

And many another nation, strong and brave,
To fight for justice and for liberty,
Has given all the rights of man, to save,
To help defend the freedom of the seas.

Shall liberty, and all we hold so dear,
Be crushed beneath the tyrant's bloody heel?
Shall royal manhood bow the head in fear?
Shall Justice to the brute be forced to kneel?

No! a thousand times, ere falls the blight
Of Hunnish slavery on our free-born sons,
We'll stand our ground and battle for the right,
Or perish 'mid the thunder of the guns.

THE FORESTER

Tune: Tipperary.

Up to bonny Glenmore came a forester one day,
Sure the snow was on the ground and everything was gray.
When he saw the soup and skilly, bread and bacon rare,
He sprang upon a lumber pile, and thus he rent the air:

Chorus: It's a long way to Grande Prairie,
It's a long way to go,
It's a long way to Grande Prairie,
Where there's lots to eat, I know;
Good-bye Perth and Glasgow,
Fare thee well, Dundee;
It's a long long, way to Grande Prairie,
To my home o'er the sea.

'Tommy got paraded to his forester C.O.,
Saying sure I want a transfer out of this and so
Send me down to Blighty and I'll join the A.S.C.—
But Tommy went to Wandsworth, where he didn't want to be.

Chorus.

Sandwiches for dinner, and it's heavy on the "sand,"
Work we get a-plenty in this God-forsaken land.
Sure we start at daybreak and it's dark before we're through,
And all we get for breakfast is a lot of sticky goo!

Chorus.

Once a month is pay day, and it's then the boys are gay;
Passes to Kingussie, and to Granton on the Spey,
Pretty girls are plenty, and there's lots of fizzy drink,
And when we get too noisy, sure they shove us in the clink.

Chorus.

But in spite of troubles, we're busy as the bees,
And at times we work in water, far above our knees,
Now and then a man is killed, but we should worry, oh,
And when the war is over sure it's home we're going to go.

Chorus.

A TRUE STORY

In the shadow of a tower,
Battered by the German shell,
Lies a lonely grave grass-covered,
Where a gallant soldier fell.

Do you want to hear the story
How this hero met his fate;
How he died to save his comrade,
Like Horatius at the gate?

At a shell-wrecked farm in Flanders,
In a gaping, shell-torn wall,
Stood a sentry, cold and weary,
As the night began to fall.

Right behind him, in a stable,
Lay his comrades, fast asleep,
Trusting to their brother comrade,
Sentry o'er their rest to keep.

It was raining, cold and dreary;
And the sentry, battle worn,
Little dreamed of deadly danger
Ere the coming of the morn.

O'er his mind the fancies flitted,
Thoughts of children, home and wife,
On his loved Alberta homestead,
Far removed from death and strife.

Hark! A sound from out the darkness
Drove these fancies from his brain;
And he listens, rifle ready,
For that sound to come again.

As the foe, to where the sentry
Stood like one of Britain's sons,
Charging came, with rifles flashing,
"Tumble up," he yelled, "The Huns!"

And his comrades, sleeping, resting,
In the stable heard his call,
Seized their arms and sprang to join him
At the shell-hole in the wall.

"Tho' their comrade's warning saved them
From a death of shame and dread,
When the Hun attack was shattered
Sentry Anderson lay dead.

Now he sleeps beside the tower,
Where no more the mortars fall,
Never more to hear the bugle,
Or to heed his comrades' call.

Though his grave has been forgotten,
Yet his name is known to fame,
And his memory lives forever
In the land from whence he came.

TOMMY'S REWARD

When war's mighty bellow was heard in the land,
And all we held dear was at stake,
Then Tommy the soldier at once took his stand
The Hun's threatened inroad to break.

He fought like a hero, with bombs and grenades,
With rifle and bayonet, too;
He swore that the Kaiser he'd blow clear to Hades,
He'd run the old Boche through and through.

And Tommy has done it, he made a clean job
Of Bill and his murderous crew.
He put little Willie and Bill on the hob
And then he came home for his due.

He'd lived upon tombstones, and bully, and hash,
Slumgullion or government stew;
He'd hobnobbed with rats, and he'd spent all his cash
To eke out his rations—would you?

Now he is home with his kiddies and wife,
He's up against poverty's grip.
For he lost his right arm in the heart of the strife—
But he's keeping a stiff upper lip.

A miserly pension is his thrice a year;
He's harassed with debts day and night,
By the butcher, the baker, the war profiteer.
By Heck! It's a shame! It's not right!.

A SONG OF SPRING

When the snow is gone
And the fields are green;
And the catkins glow
With a silver sheen;
When the chips are bare
In the old backyard,
And the earth turns black
'Neath the sulky's shard;
When the stubble fields
Are brown and bare;
And the sun shines warm
On the crocus fair;
Then I sigh for home
In the far northwest;
For the golden fields
Of a country blest;
For my Lilly fair,
And my baby boy;
For days of peace,
And a life of joy.
If once I get back
I never will roam—
For there's never a place
Like Home, Sweet Home.

THE SCRUB-WOMAN'S LAMENT

I am only a poor scrub-woman,
Once I was young and fair,
Once I had cheeks like roses,
Once I had golden hair.

It seems but a day since Harry
Kissed me, his soldier bride,
Then went away to battle
And like a soldier died.

They brought him back from the trenches:
He led the charge it seemed,
They said he died like a hero,
My Harry was all I had dreamed.

They sent me his watch and medals,
I keep them safe at the bank,
And before poor Harry was buried
They gave him a sergeant's rank.

I still have his life insurance
Put by for a rainy day,
For when I am old and helpless
It will keep the wolf at bay.

So now I work in Tuxedo
Earning my daily bread.
And when I think of my Harry,
It's many the tears I shed.

My hair has turned to silver
My eyes have faded too,
But I know my Harry is waiting
Afar in the skies so blue.

And the trampling feet go by
With never a thought or care
For the lowly meek scrub-woman
With her wealth of silvery hair.

RHYMES OF AN EX-PATIENT

There's a spot in Manitoba
Where the wide Red River flows,
Where the land is green in summer
Or is white with winter snows,
Where the lame and sick and helpless
Find a haven of repose,
What we'd do without Tuxedo
Or the Sisters Heaven knows.

There we leave our ills behind us
In Tuxedo's ward so good,
There the Sisters have to mind us
And prepare our daily food,
There we get our fish on Fridays
Milk or tea and coffee too,
Bread and meat and many puddings
All things good and fit to chew.

Sure the wards are always spotless
Beds are tidied, tables swept,
Floors are scrubbed and mops are banished
To the place where mops are kept,
Though my spel is mostly harmless
And is lacking much in rhyme,
Let, Oh! Let me leave behind me
Footprints on the sands of time.

ADDENDA

'Tis of years some six or seven
Since he offered up his prayer,
Go today to old Tuxedo
You will find the footprints there.

THE CYCLE OF THE SEASONS

Spring

When the warm spring sun is shining
And it's time to plant the beans,
When the mind of man is pining
For a mess of garden greens,
When the brooklet is a-humming
And the birdies have come home
When the river's up and coming
And the bees are building comb,
When it's time to set the chicken
And it's feeling good to live,
Then you'll find without much kickin'
That the spring has done arriv'.

Summer

When the days are hot as blisters
And we love to hunt the shade,
When we call upon our sisters
For some home-made lemonade,
When the wheat is green and growing
And the spuds are jumping too,

When the farmer's busy mowing,
In the hay along the slough,
When your tummy is a-yearning
For a glass of icy beer,
Then you'll know without much learning
That the good old summer's here.

Autumn

When the frost is on the clover
And the wheat is in the shock,
When it's time to hunt the plover
And to sell the fatted stock.
When the spuds are in the cellar
And the shed is full of wood,

When the leaves are turning yellar
And we mend the tractor's hood,
When we love to hear the jingle
Of the horses nearing home,
And your toes are all a-tingle
Then you'll know that fall has come.

Winter

When the snow is falling downward
And the stove is glowing too,
When your thoughts will wander toward
And there's moose meat in the stew,
When there's snowbirds by the dozen
On the wheat stack on the hill,

When the swimming hole is frozen
And it's silent at the mill,
Then we sit around the fire
As we listen to the blast,
And we know by all that's dire
Winter time has come at last.

THE CALL OF THE NORTH

There's a spot in North Alberta
Where the wide Peace River flows,
Where the land is green in summer
Or is white with winter snows,
Where the lakes are full of fishes
And the woods are full of moose,
And the marsh is all a-clatter
With the call of duck and goose.

Chorus:

Then it's Ho for the North that is silent,
And it's Ho for the North that is strong,
And it's Ho for the night
When the moon shines bright
And it's Ho for the days that are long.

Where the music of the tractor
Carries on the evening breeze,
And the air is sweetly scented
By the Balm-of-Gilead trees,
Where the saskatoons in clusters
Grow so thickly on the vine,
And the raspberries in plenty
Grow beneath the spruce and pine.

Chorus:

'Tis a land of milk and honey
Deer and partridge by the score,
You can shoot the prairie chicken
Right from out your kitchen door,
And I'm going home tomorrow
Never more afar to roam,
For I've found the dearest place is
Prairie City HOME SWEET HOME.

Date Due

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THE PASSING OF THE FOREST

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